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Lenhof et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: *Jan. 3, 2006**

(54) **GOLF CLUB**

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(73) Assignee: **Callaway Golf Company**, Carlsbad, CA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(22) Filed: **Jun. 16, 2005**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(60) Provisional application No. 60/519,501, filed on Nov. 12, 2003.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63B 53/02 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **473/305**; 473/307; 473/313; 473/309

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 473/305–315; 403/24, 200, 299, 300, 309–313, 359.1
See application file for complete search history.

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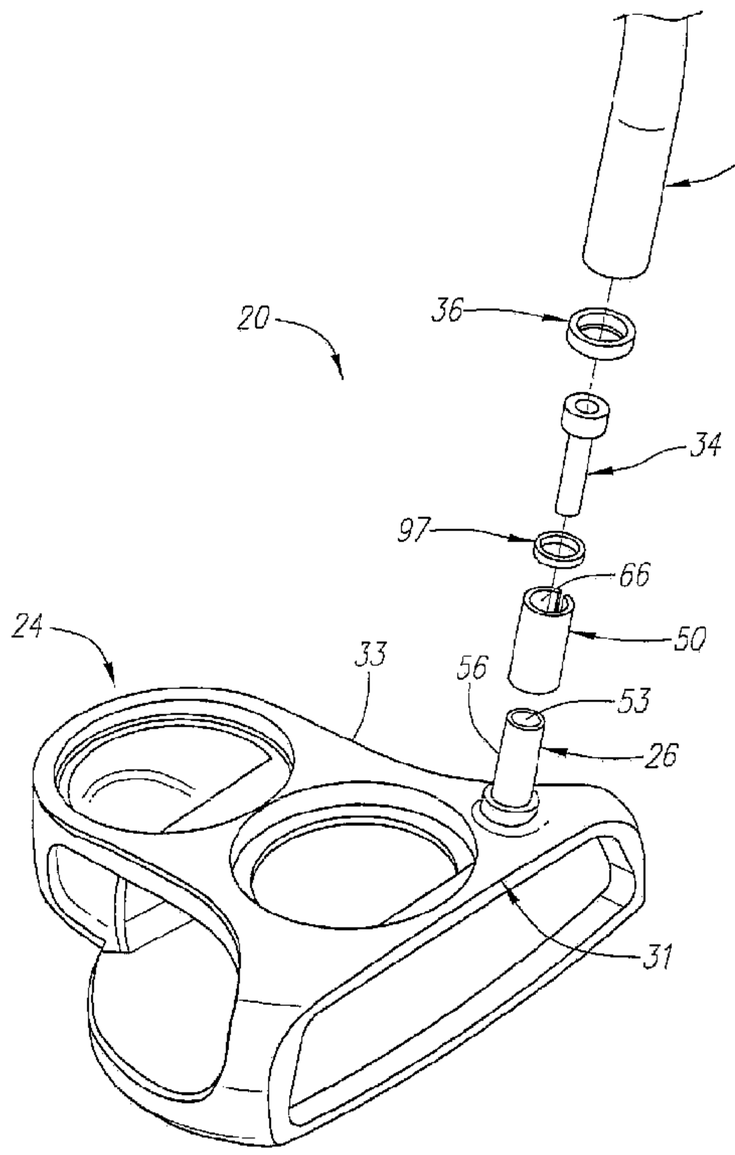
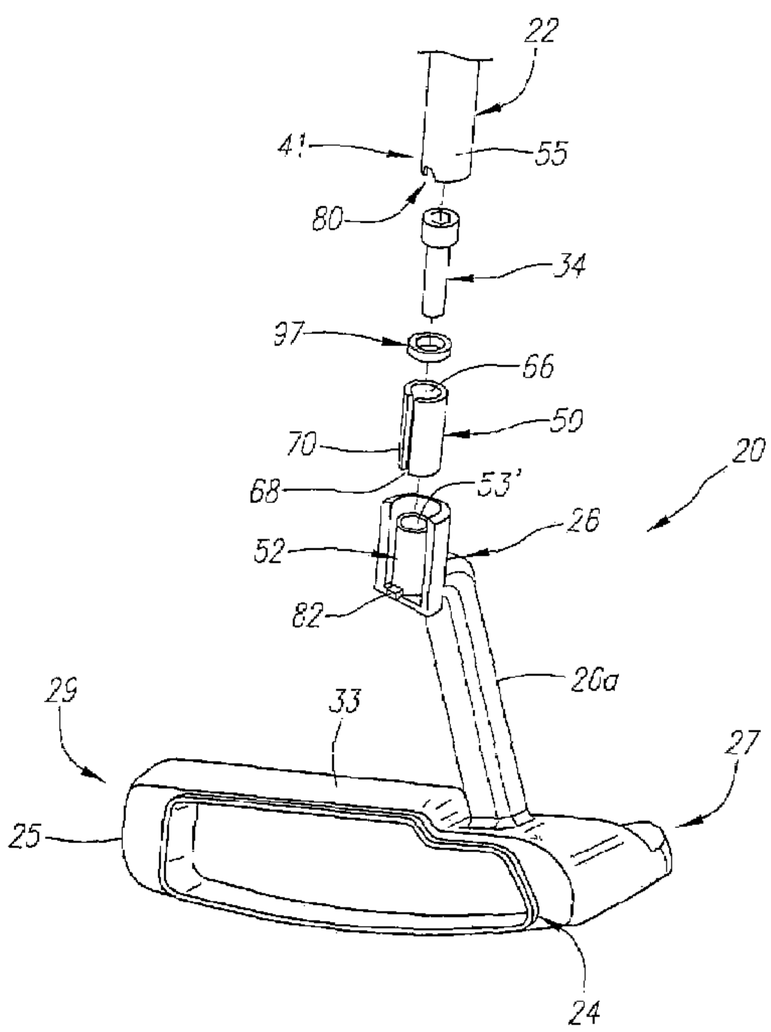
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The golf club **(20)** of the present invention includes a shaft **(22)**, a club head **(24)** and an attachment assembly **(30)**, which allows for an essentially adhesive free connection between the shaft **(22)** and the club head **(24)**. In one embodiment, the attachment assembly **(30)** includes a screw **(34)** and a shaft ring **(32)**. The shaft ring **(32)** is welded to the interior wall **(40)** of the shaft **(22)** near the tip end **(41)**. Another embodiment of the attachment assembly **(30)** includes a locking sleeve **(50)**.

5 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets





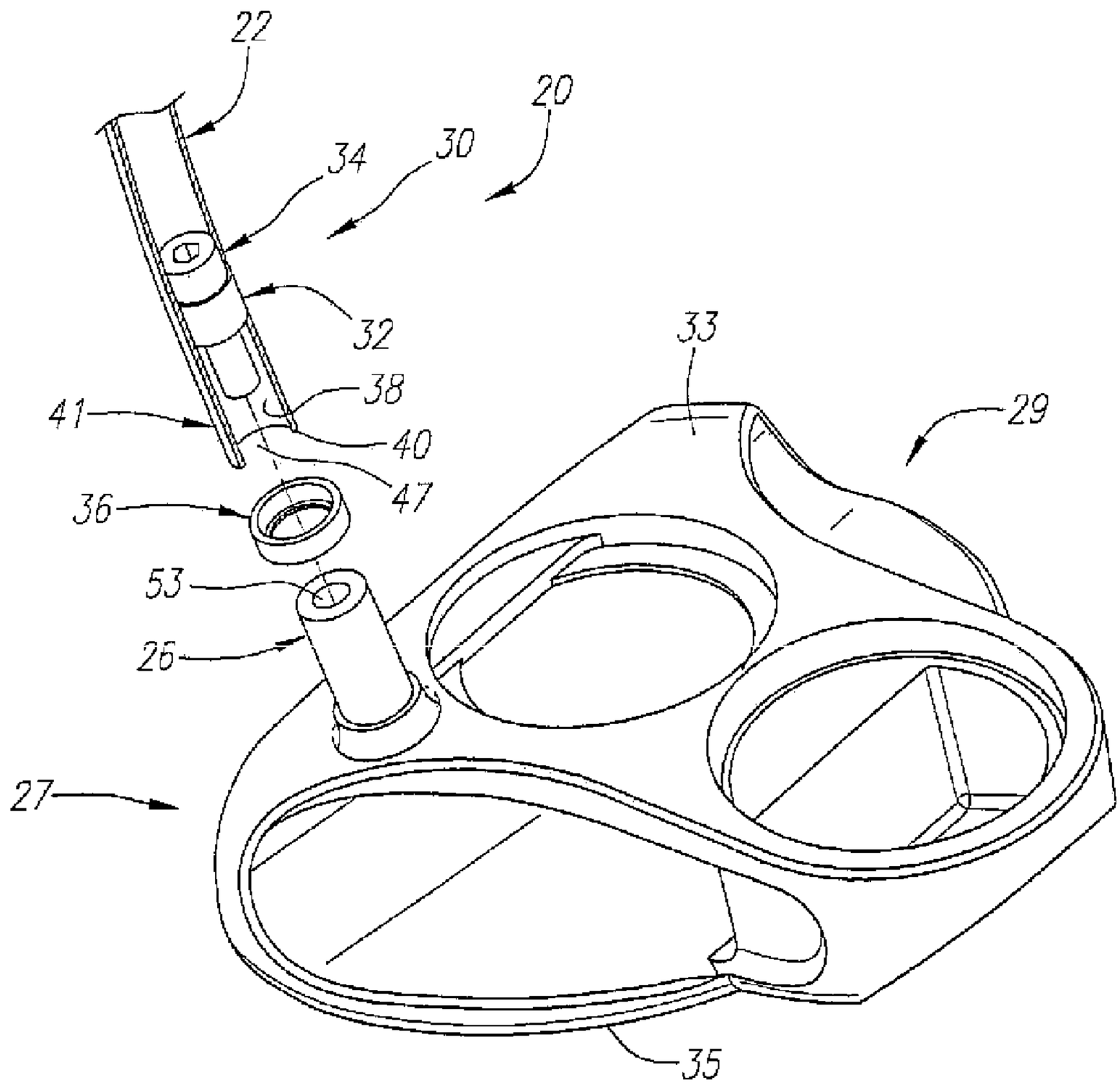


FIG. 1

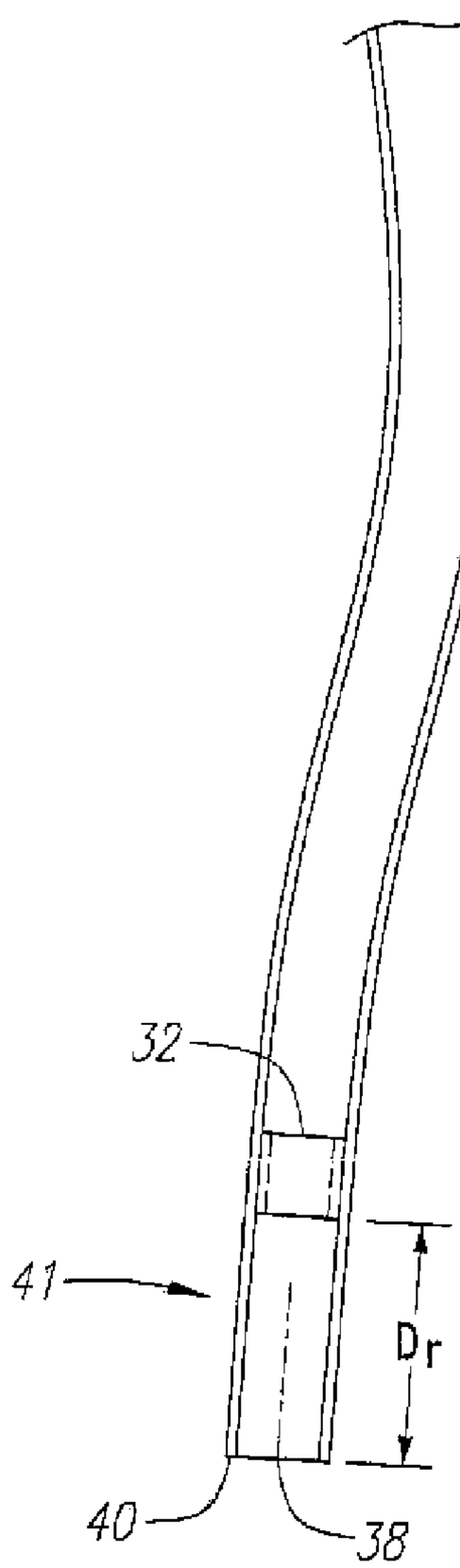


FIG. 2

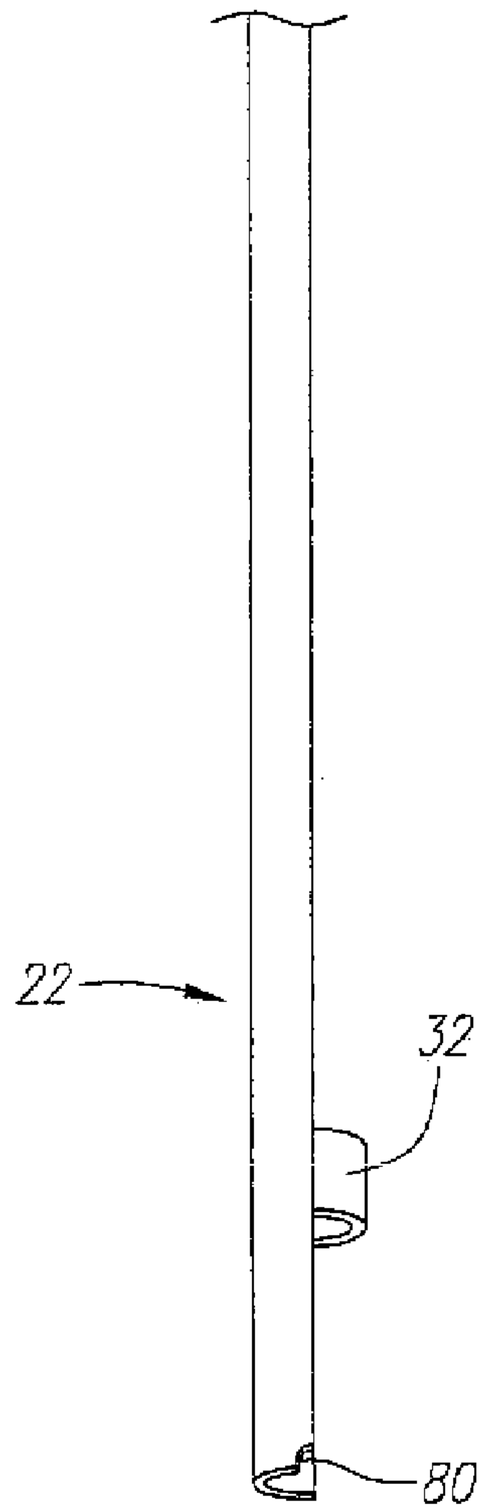


FIG. 3

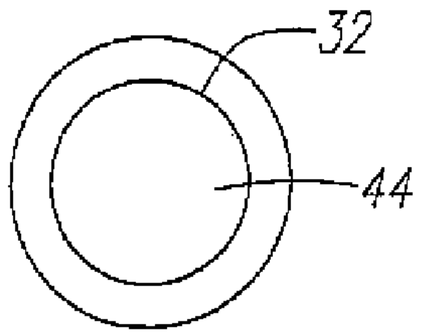


FIG. 4

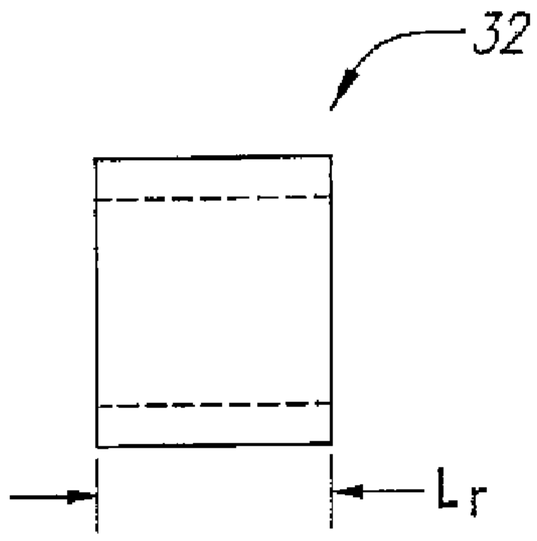


FIG. 5

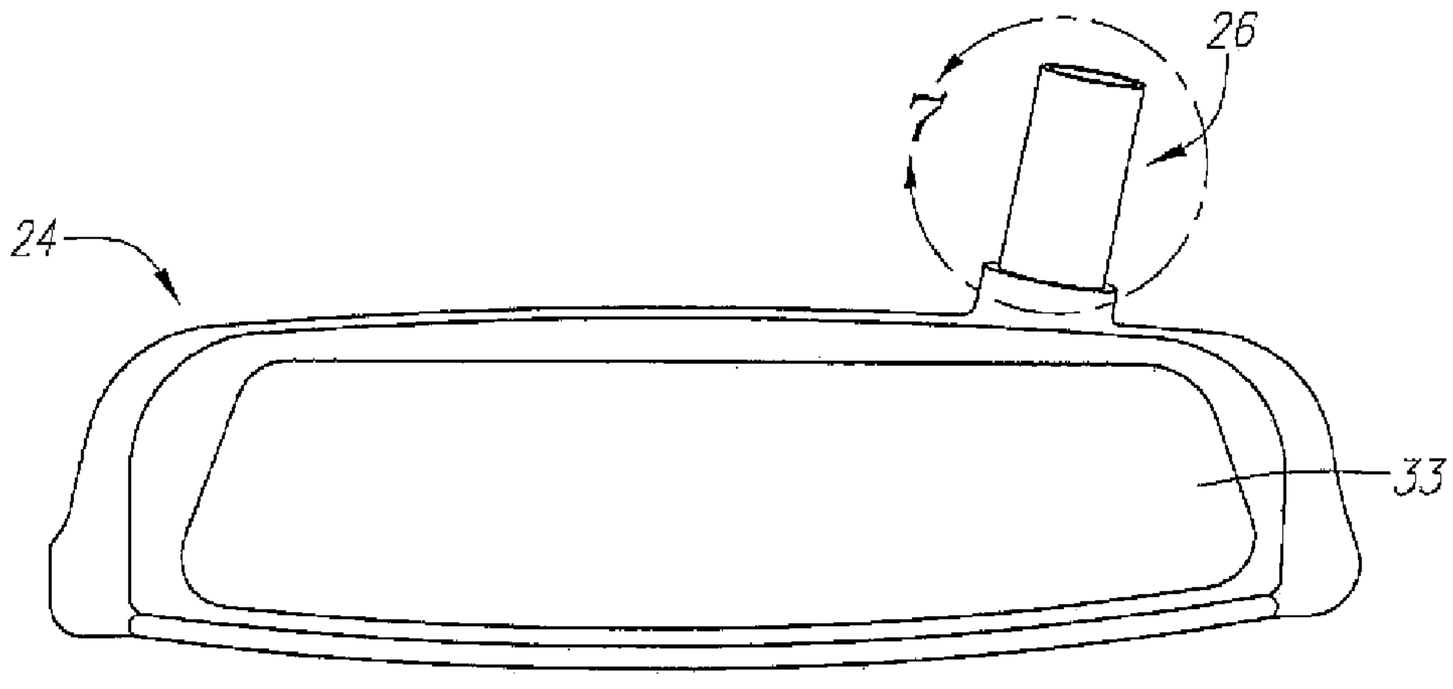


FIG. 6

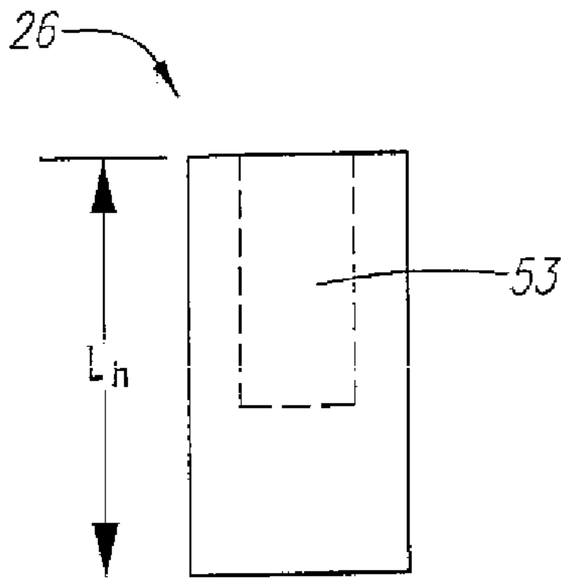


FIG. 7

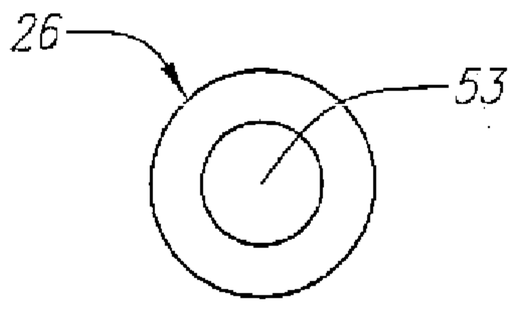


FIG. 8

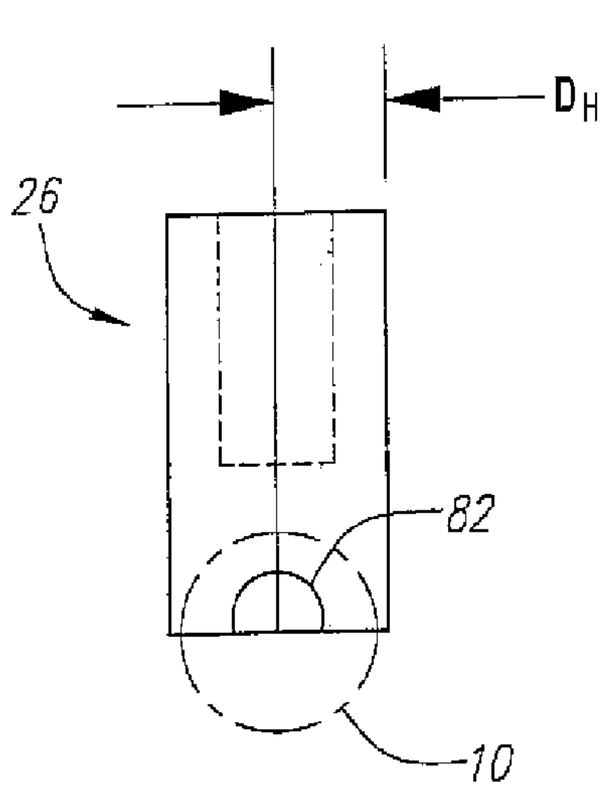


FIG. 9

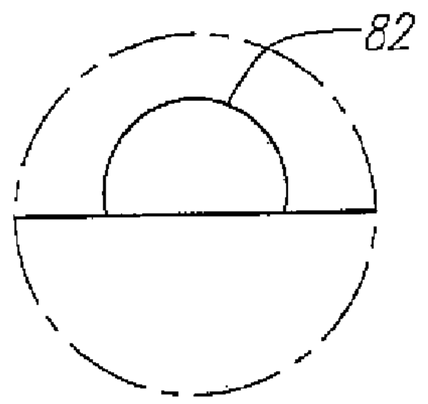
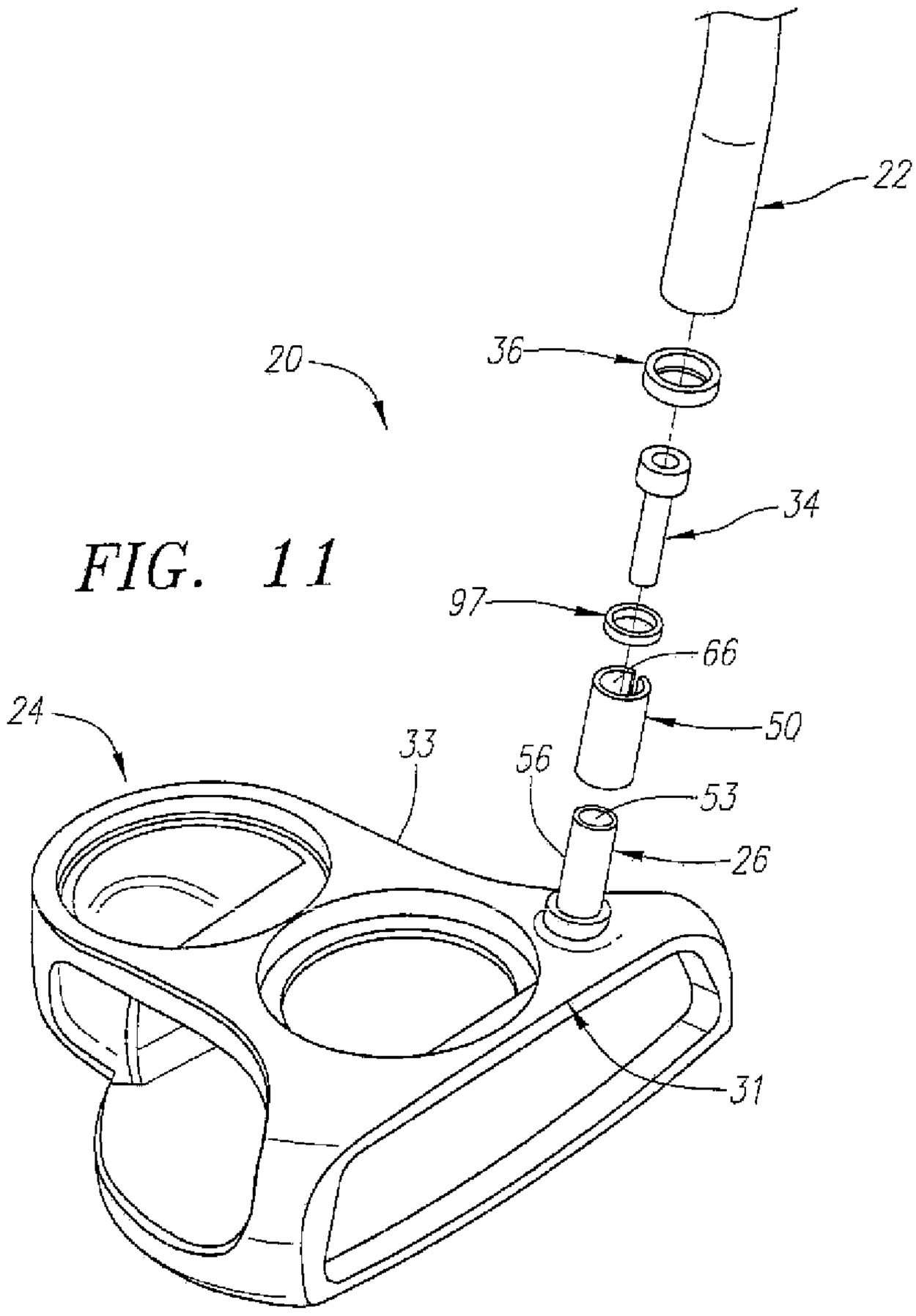


FIG. 10



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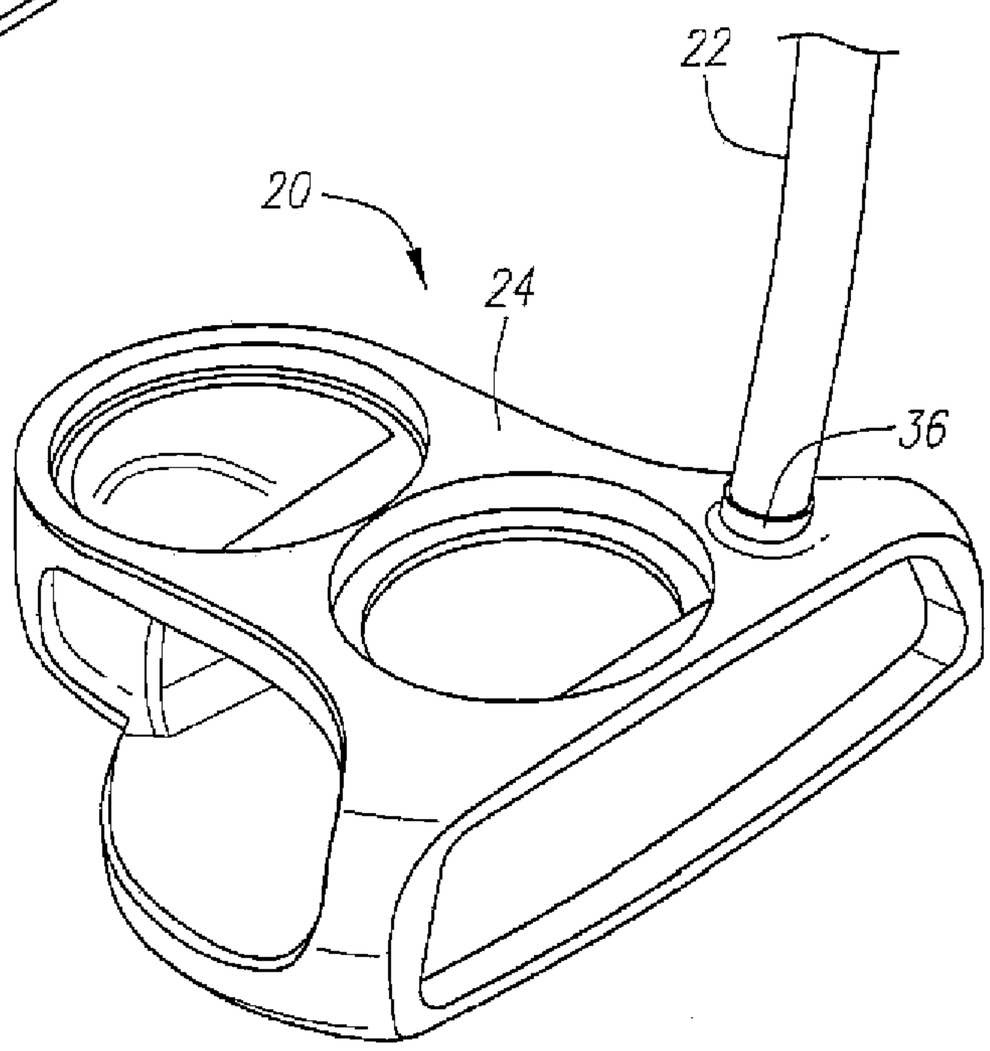


FIG. 12

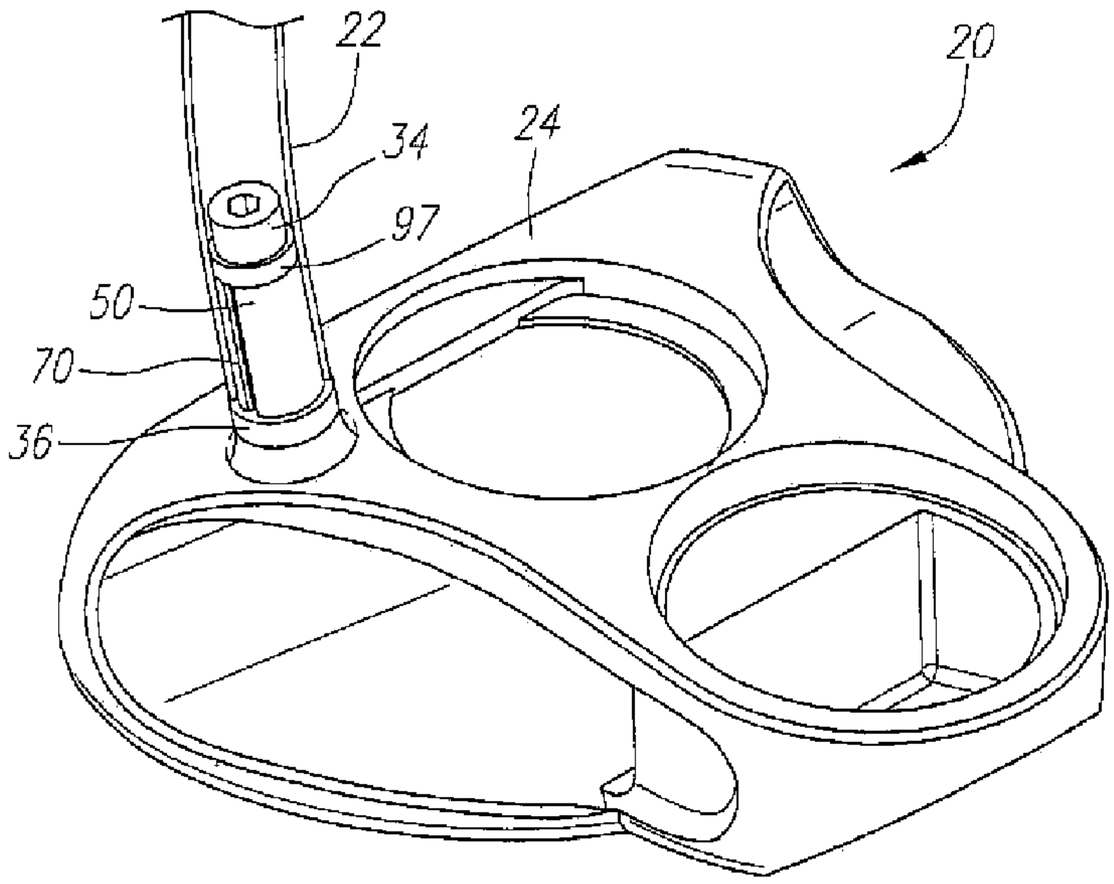


FIG. 13

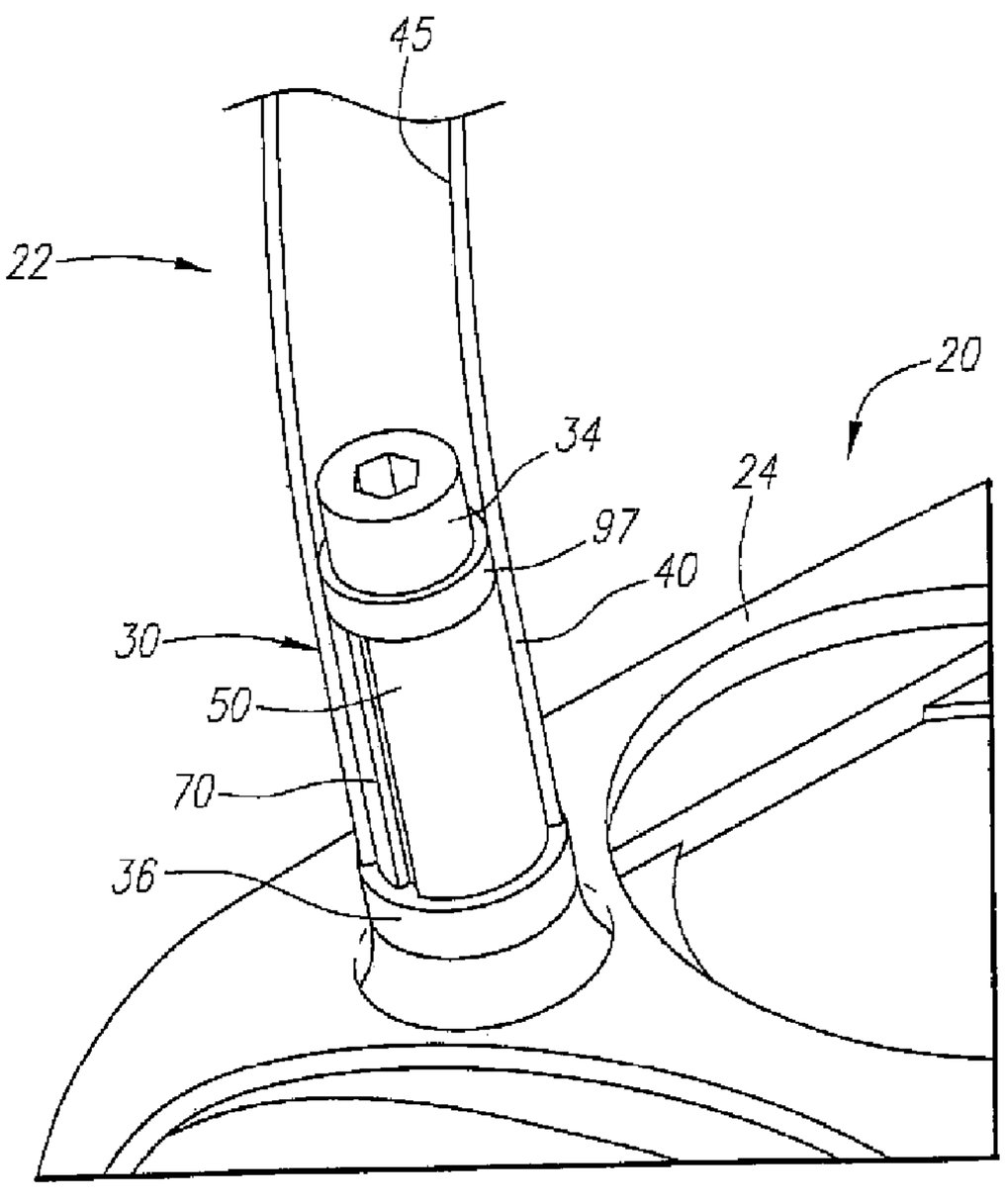


FIG. 14

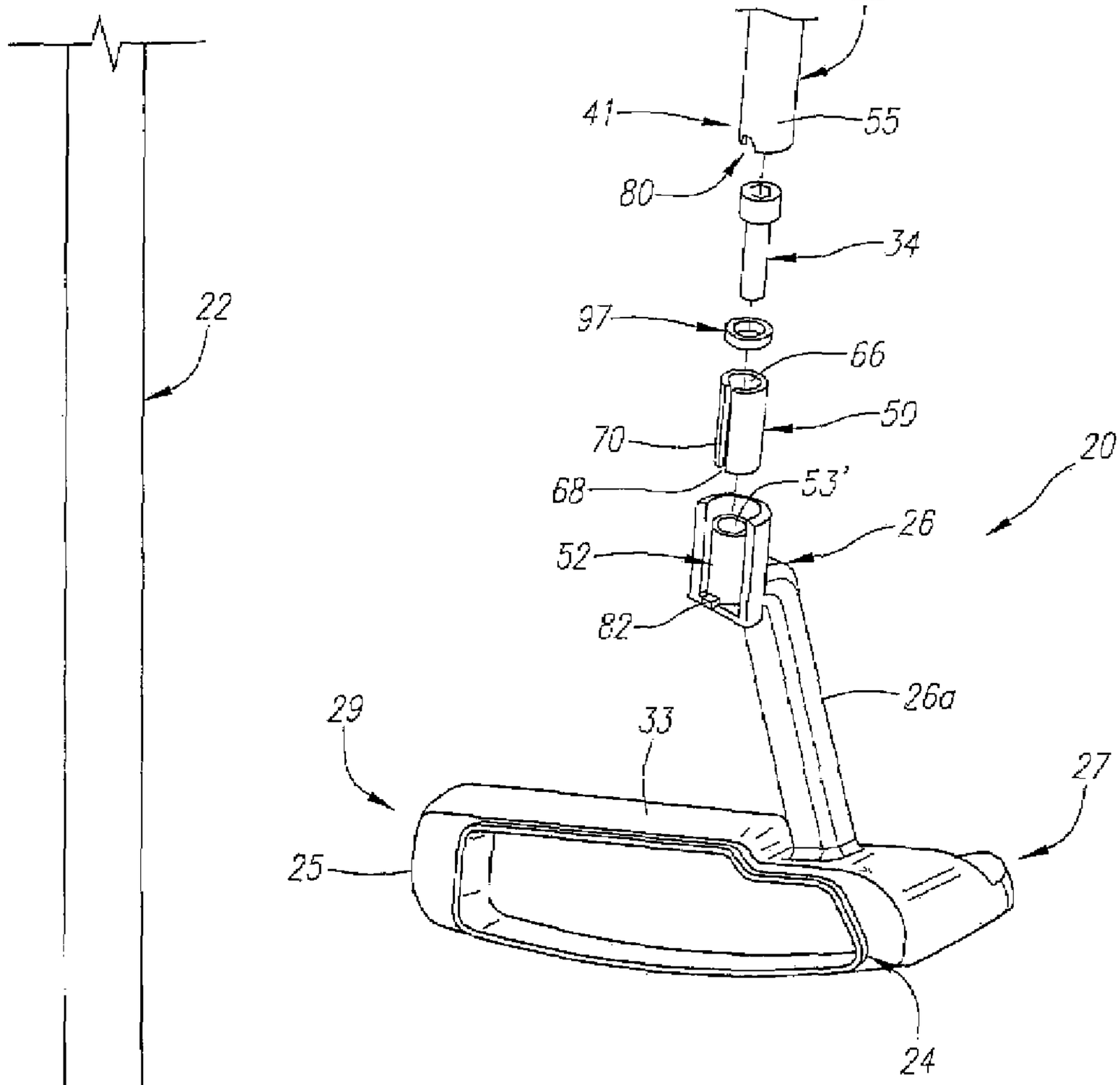
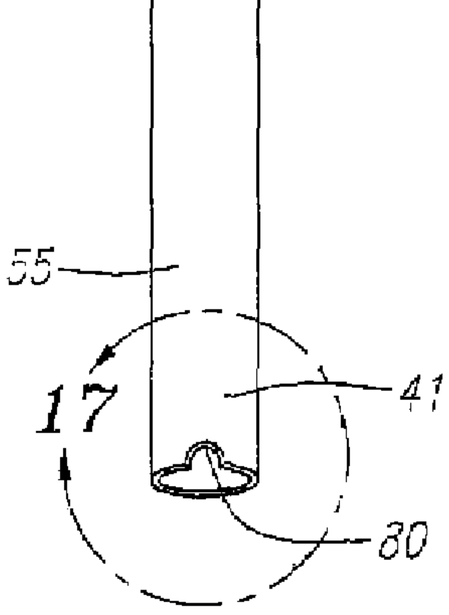


FIG. 15



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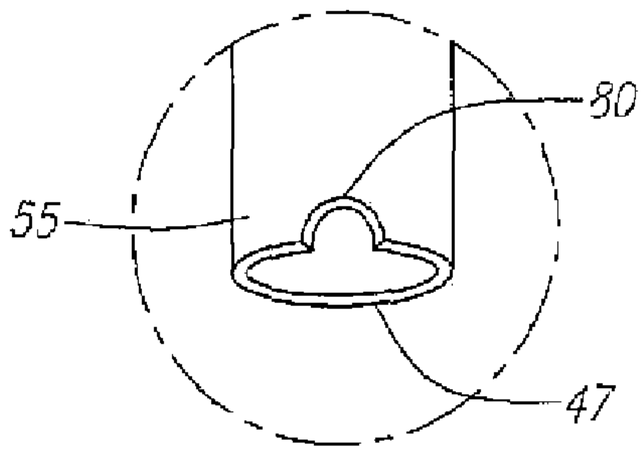


FIG. 17

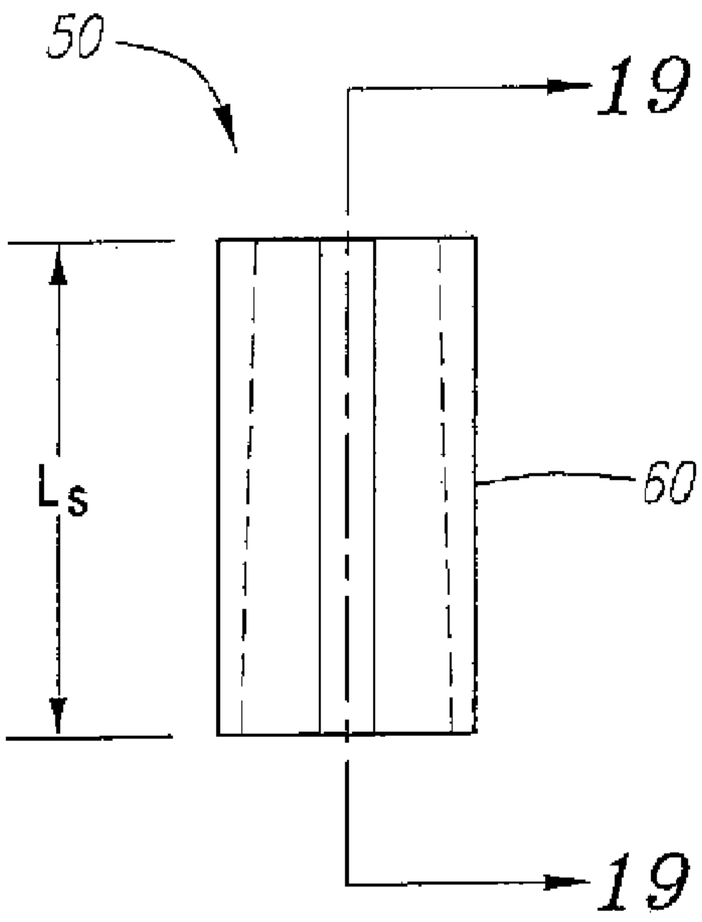


FIG. 18

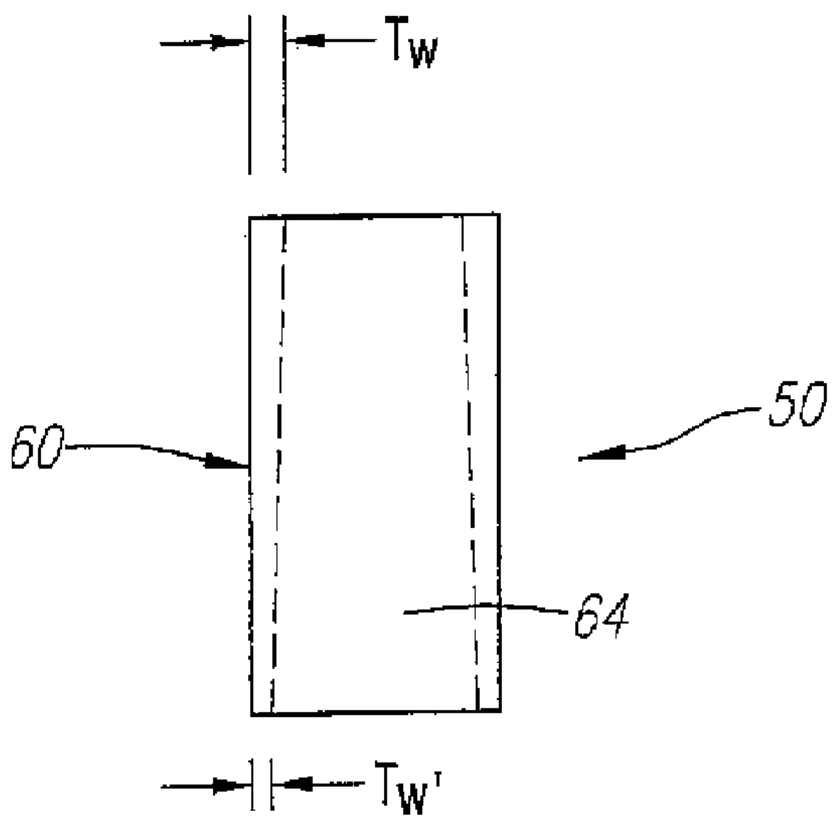


FIG. 19

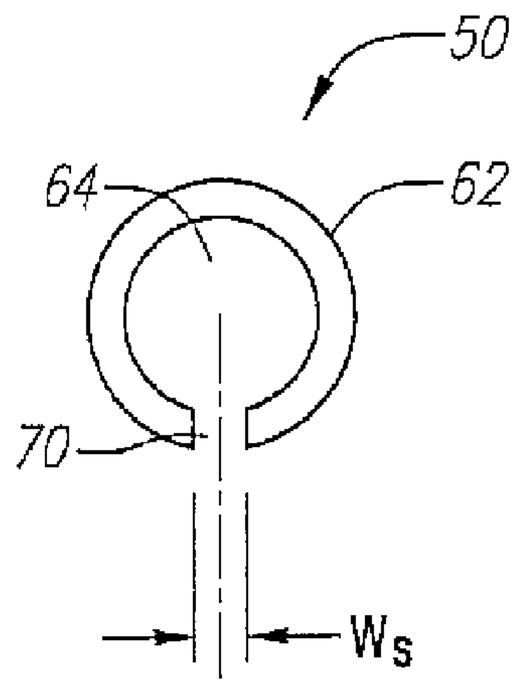


FIG. 20

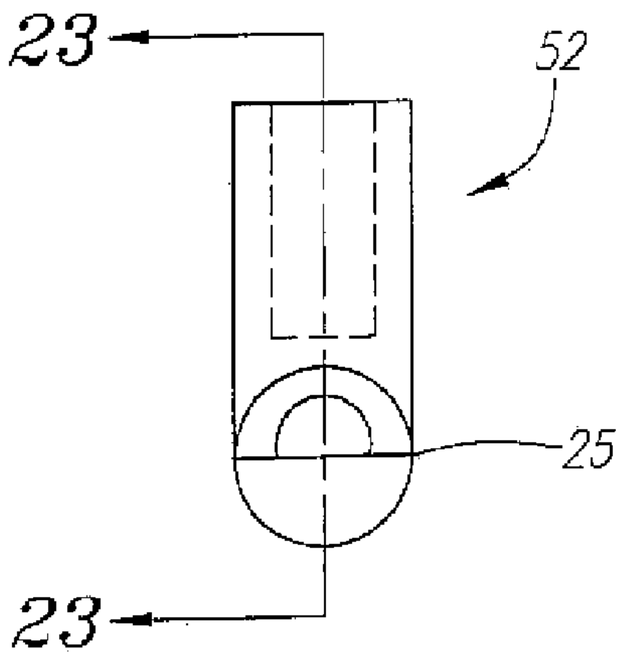
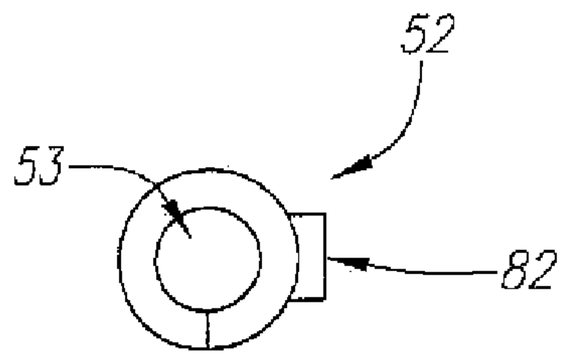


FIG. 21



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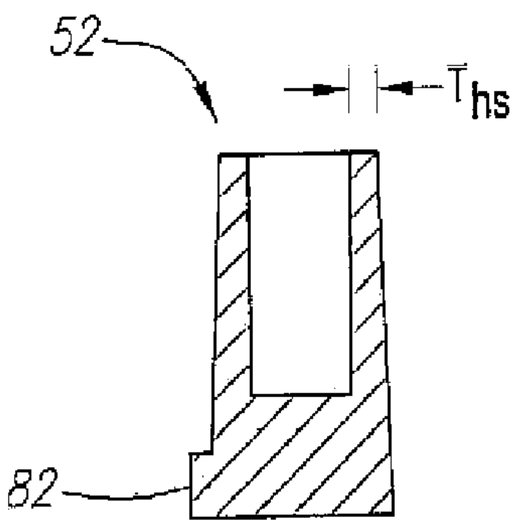

FIG. 23

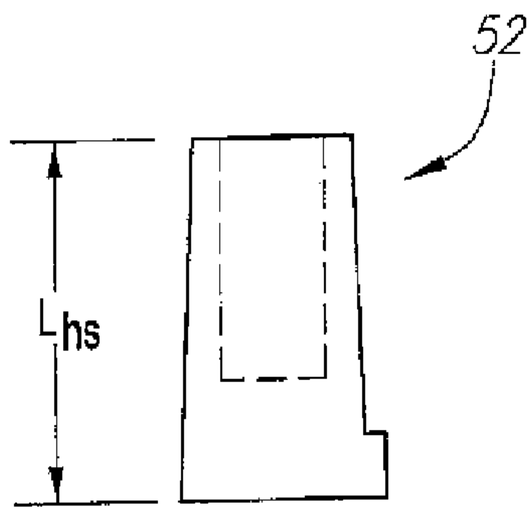

FIG. 24

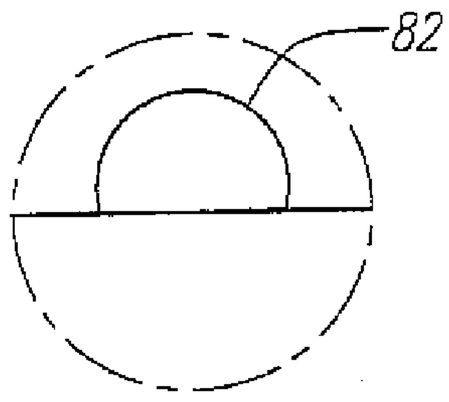

FIG. 25

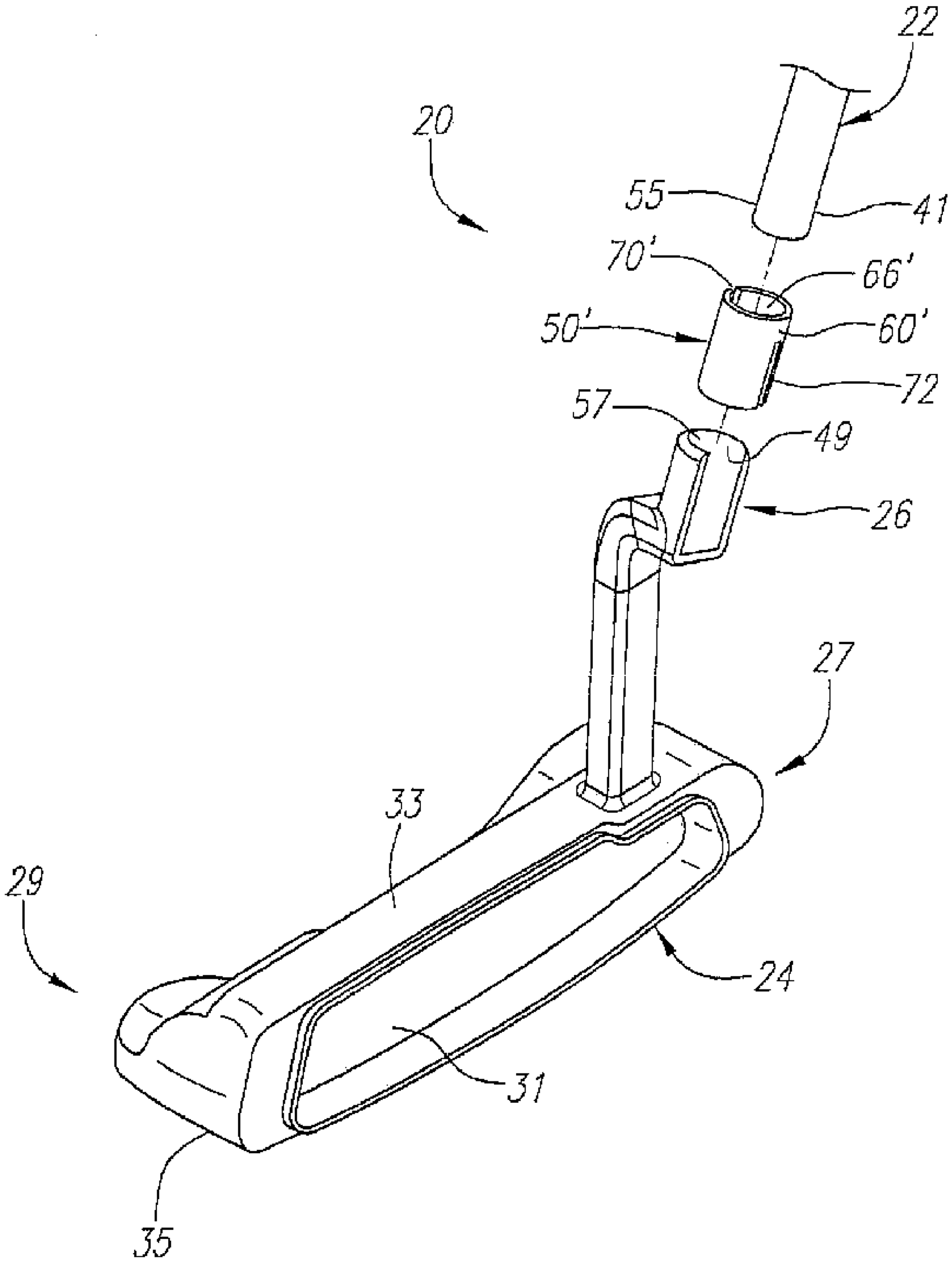

FIG. 26

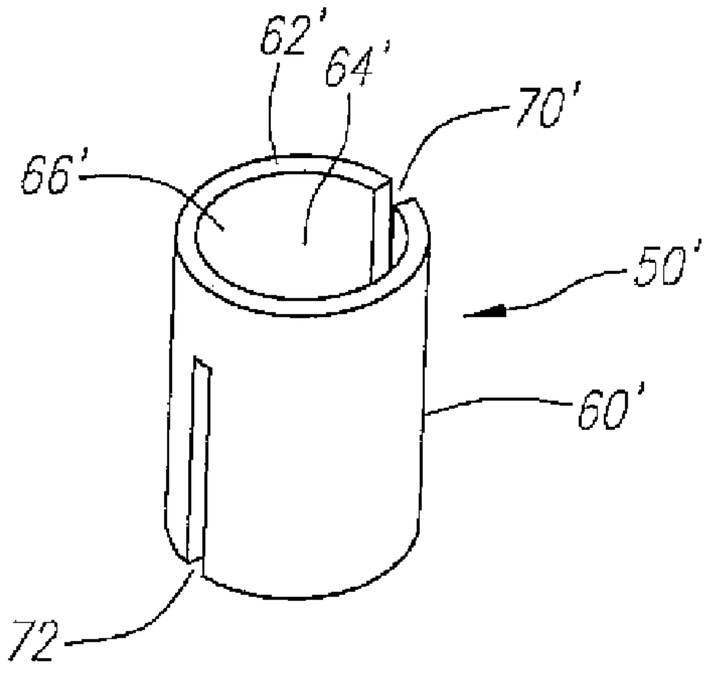

FIG. 27

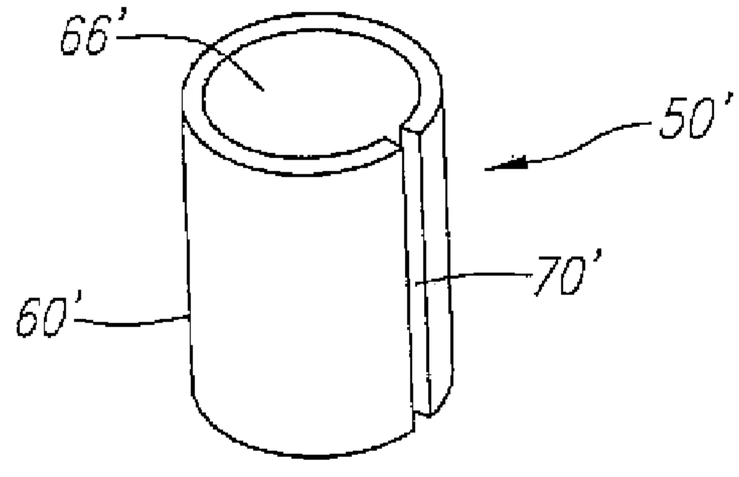

FIG. 28

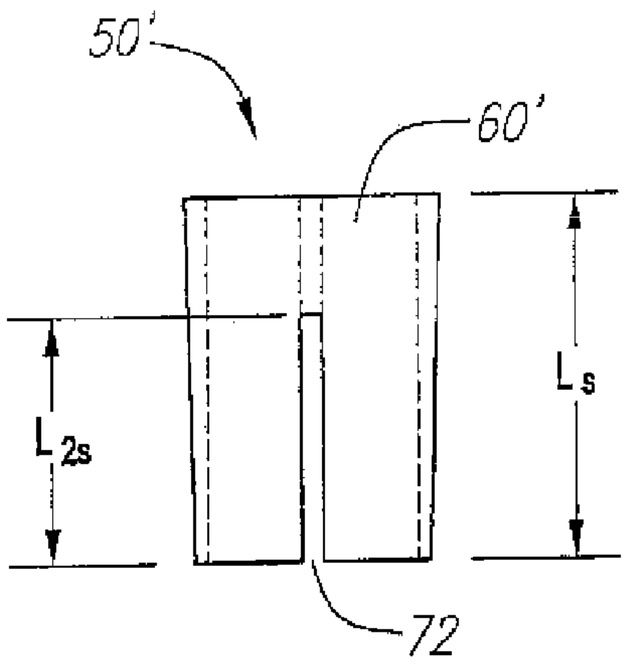

FIG. 29

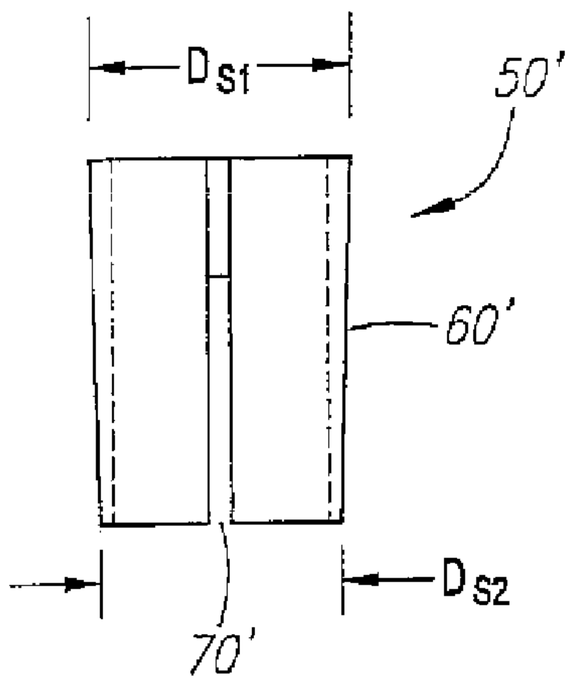

FIG. 30

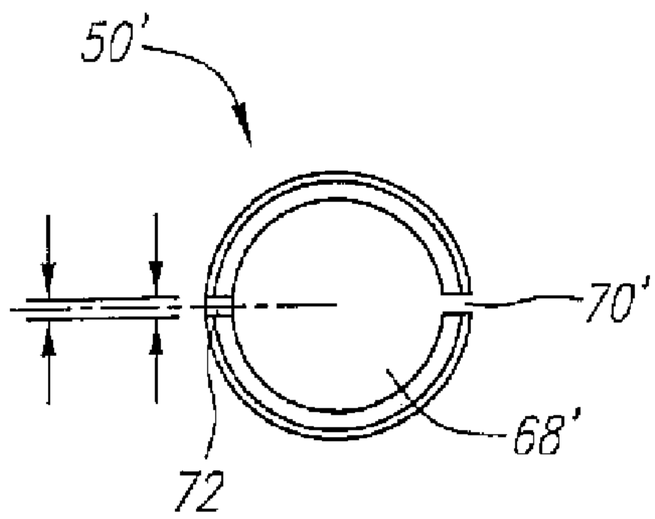

FIG. 31

GOLF CLUB

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/709,600, filed on May 17, 2004, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/519,501, filed on Nov. 12, 2003.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a golf club. More specifically, the present invention relates to an assembly for securing a shaft to a golf club head without the use of an adhesive.

2. Description of the Related Art

The game of golf has benefited greatly from technological advancements throughout its glorious history. Examples include the progression of golf ball from a leather featherie version to the gutta percha version to the dimpled version to the two-piece and three piece versions of today. Another example of the technological advancement of golf is the progression of the shaft from wood to metal to graphite to the hybrid versions of today. Yet another example of the technological advancement of golf is the progression of woods from persimmon to steel to titanium to the advanced materials of today. All of these advancements have greatly improved the game of golf for golfers everywhere. However, the game of golf still requires a shaft connected to a golf club head in order to strike a golf ball.

The attachment of the shaft to the golf club head requires securing the shaft to the golf club head in a manner that withstands the tremendous forces exerted during swinging and impact with a golf ball.

One preferred manner for attaching a shaft to a metal wood has been the use of an epoxy to secure the shaft within a hosel. This attachment procedure is usually performed manually, with an operator overcoating a tip end of a shaft with epoxy, and then inserting the shaft into the hosel wherein excess epoxy (2 to 4 grams) is flushed onto the golf club head. In a through-bore golf club head, the tip end of the shaft extends through the bore in the sole of the golf club head and is cut during the assembly process. This attachment procedure is wasteful and may be detrimental to the operator if performed continuously throughout the day. Further, such an attachment procedure typically requires heating the golf club in an oven for two hours to cure the epoxy for securing the shaft to the golf club head. Such ovens require great amounts of floor space in a factory, and use excessive amounts of energy. Thus, there is a need for an improvement in the attachment of a shaft to a golf club head.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a golf club that eliminates the need for an adhesive or epoxy to secure a shaft to a golf club head, which reduces production time while making the procedure easier for an operator.

One aspect of the present invention is a golf club that includes a shaft, a club head and a locking sleeve. The shaft has a wall defining a hollow interior, a tip end and a butt end. The club head includes a body having a heel end and a toe end. The body further includes a hosel having an open end and a hollow interior. The locking sleeve engages an exterior surface of the tip end of the shaft and an interior surface of the hosel to secure the shaft in the hosel of the club head. The locking sleeve has a body with a wall defining an aperture that extends from a first opening to a second opening. The locking sleeve body is tapered in diameter from the first opening to the second opening. A first slot is formed in the wall of the locking sleeve body, and the first slot extends from the first opening to the second opening. The locking sleeve may further include a second slot formed in the wall and extending from the second opening toward the first opening. The second slot, however, stops prior to reaching the first opening. The locking sleeve provides for an essentially adhesive free attachment of the shaft to the club head.

Having briefly described the present invention, the above and further objects, features and advantages thereof will be recognized by those skilled in the pertinent art from the following detailed description of the invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is an exploded perspective view of a preferred embodiment of a golf club of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is an isolated view of a shaft illustrating the interior and placement of a shaft ring within the shaft.

FIG. **3** is an isolated cut-away view of the interior of a shaft to illustrate placement of a shaft ring within the shaft

FIG. **4** is an isolated top plan view of the shaft ring.

FIG. **5** is an isolated side view of the shaft ring.

FIG. **6** is a front plan view of a putter-type golf club head of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **7** is an isolated view of the hosel of the putter-type golf club head of FIG. **6**.

FIG. **8** is a top plan view of the hosel of FIG. **7**.

FIG. **9** is an isolated side view of the hosel of FIG. **7**.

FIG. **10** is an isolated view of circle **10** of FIG. **9**.

FIG. **11** is an exploded perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a golf club of the present invention.

FIG. **12** is a perspective view of the assembled golf club of FIG. **11**.

FIG. **13** is a perspective view of the assembled golf club of FIG. **11** illustrating the attachment assembly.

FIG. **14** is an isolated view of attachment assembly shown in FIG. **13**.

FIG. **15** is an exploded perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a golf club of the present invention.

FIG. **16** is an isolated view of the shaft of the golf club of FIG. **15**.

FIG. **17** is an isolated view of circle **17** of FIG. **14**.

FIG. **18** is an isolated view of the sleeve of the golf club of FIG. **15**.

FIG. **19** is a cross-sectional view of the sleeve of FIG. **18**.

FIG. **20** is a top plan view of the sleeve FIG. **18**.

FIG. **21** is an isolated view of the stub of the hosel of the golf club of FIG. **15**.

FIG. **22** is a top plan view of the stub of FIG. **21**.

FIG. **23** is a cross-sectional view of the stub of FIG. **21** along lines **23**—**23**.

FIG. **24** is a side of the stub of FIG. **21**.

FIG. **25** is an isolated view of circle **25** of FIG. **21**.

FIG. **26** is an exploded perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a golf club of the present invention.

FIG. **27** is an isolated view of the sleeve of the golf club of FIG. **26**.

FIG. **28** is a perspective view of the sleeve of FIG. **27**.

FIG. **29** is a plan side view of the sleeve of FIG. **27**.

FIG. **30** is a plan side view of the sleeve of FIG. **27**.

FIG. **31** is a bottom plan view of the sleeve FIG. **18**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A golf club of the present invention is generally designated **20**. The primary components of the golf club **20** are a shaft **22**, a golf club head **24** with a hosel **26** and an attachment assembly **30**. The attachment assembly **30** secures the shaft to the hosel **26** of the golf club head **24** with a minimum amount of adhesive or preferably without any adhesive material. In a preferred embodiment, the golf club is a putter. Preferably the shaft **22** is composed of a metal material such as stainless steel, a titanium alloy, or a like metal material.

A preferred embodiment of the golf club **20** is illustrated in FIG. **1**. The shaft **22** has a tip end **41** and a butt end **43**, not shown. At the tip end **41** is an opening **47** to the hollow interior **38** of the shaft **22**. A shaft wall **40** defines the hollow interior **38**. In a preferred embodiment, the diameter of the shaft **22** tapers from the butt end **43** to the tip end **41**, with the tip end **41** of the shaft **22** having a smaller diameter than the butt end **43**. A typical shaft diameter at the tip end is approximately 0.335 inch. Preferably the shaft **22** has a notch **80** at the opening **47**. Typically, the shaft **22** has a length of thirty to forty inches, with longer length shafts available for unconventional golf clubs such as "belly putters."

The golf club head **24** preferably has a body **25** with a face **31**, a crown **33** and a sole **35**. A putter-type golf club head is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,471,600, entitled Putter Head, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. The hosel **26** is positioned at a heel end **27** of the club head **24** with a toe end **29** opposite the heel end **27**. The hosel **26** is generally defined as a means for connecting the shaft **22** to the club head **24**. A preferred hosel **26** is a cylindrical extension extending outward from the crown **33** of the body **25**. Other hosels include interior hosels, which are generally cylindrical tubes within a club head. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **1** and **6–10**, the hosel **26** extends outward from the crown **33** a length, Lh, of preferably between 0.5 inch and 1.5 inches, and most preferably 0.625 inch. The hosel **26** preferably has an opening **49** and a threaded bore **53**. The hosel **26** preferably has a diameter, Rh, ranging from 0.15 inch to 0.20 inch, and most preferably has a diameter, Rh, of 0.171 inch. A protuberance **82** is preferably located on an exterior surface **56** of the hosel **26** to engage the notch **80** of the shaft **22**. The notch **80**/protuberance **82** engagement provides an alignment mechanism for the shaft **22** and provides an initial engagement of the shaft **22** to the club head **24** prior to a final connection by the attachment assembly **30**.

In the preferred embodiment, the attachment assembly **30** is composed of a shaft ring **32** which is secured to the wall **40** of the shaft **22**, and a screw **34**. As shown in FIGS. **2–5**, the shaft ring **32** is preferably welded to the wall **40** of the shaft **22**, preferably a distance, Dr, from the opening **47** ranging from 0.25 inch to 2.5 inches, and most preferably 0.750 inches from the opening **47** at the tip end **41** of the shaft **22**. The screw ring **32** is preferably composed of a metal material similar to the shaft **22** such as stainless steel or a titanium alloy. The screw ring preferably has a length, Lr, ranging from 0.1 inch to 1.0 inch, and most preferably a length of 0.250 inch. The screw ring preferably has a diameter of approximately 0.310 inch. The shaft ring **32** has a bore **44** with a diameter of preferably 0.218 inch. The bore **44** is preferably threaded. The screw **34** is preferably a 10-32×⅝ screw and has a screw head **46** and a screw body threaded body **48**. The screw **34** secures the shaft **22** to the club head **24** through threadingly engaging the threaded bore **53** of the hosel **26**. The screw **34** is placed through the butt end **43** of the shaft, through the bore **44** in the shaft ring **32** and into the threaded bore **53**. A screwdriver, not shown, is placed through the interior **38** of the shaft from the butt end **43** to turn the screw **34** to threadingly engage the threaded bore **53** of the hosel **26** thereby securing the shaft **22** to the club head **24** without the need of an adhesive. The screwdriver is then removed and a grip, not shown, is placed on the butt end **43** of the shaft **22**.

FIGS. **11–14** illustrate an alternative embodiment of the golf club of the present invention. This embodiment is similar to the embodiment of FIG. **1**. However, the attachment assembly **30** includes a locking sleeve **50** to secure the shaft **22** to the club head **24**. Further, a washer **97** is used in place of the shaft ring **32**. The screw **34** is threaded into the threaded bore **53** of the hosel **26**. The locking sleeve **50** is placed within the hollow interior **38** of the shaft **22** to engage with the interior surface **45** of the wall **40** of the shaft **22**.

As shown in FIGS. **18–20**, the locking sleeve **50** has a body **60** with a wall **62**. The locking sleeve **50** is preferably composed of a metal material, most preferably an aluminum material. The body **60** has an aperture **64** extending between a first opening **66** and a second opening **68**. The body **60** also has at least a first slot **70** in the wall **62** extending from the first opening **66** to the second opening **68**. The locking sleeve **50** preferably has a length, Ls, which ranges from 0.25 inch to 2.0 inches, and is most preferably 0.6 inch in length. The locking sleeve **50** preferably has an outer diameter ranging from 0.250 inch to 0.5 inch, and is most preferably 0.324 inch. Further, the locking sleeve **50** preferably tapers from the first opening **66** to the second opening from 1 to 4 degrees, and most preferably 1.5 degrees. The thickness of the wall **62** nearest the first opening **66** is preferably thicker than the thickness of the wall **62** nearest the second opening **68**. In a preferred embodiment, the thickness of the wall **62** near the first opening **66** is twice as thick as the thickness of the wall **62** near the second opening **68**. In a most preferred embodiment, the thickness of the wall **62** near the first opening **66**, T_w, is 0.044 inch in thickness, and the thickness of the wall **62** near the second opening **68**, $T_{w'}$, is 0.027 inch. The first slot **70** preferably has a width ranging from 0.030 inch to 1.5 inches, and is most preferably 0.076 inch. The first slot **70** allows for the contraction and extension of the locking sleeve **50**.

In this embodiment, the locking sleeve **50** expands or contracts to tightly engage the interior surface **45** of the shaft **22** and the exterior surface **56** of the hosel **26**. The screw **34** and washer **97** prevent the vertical or lengthwise movement of the locking sleeve **50**.

FIG. **15** illustrates yet another embodiment of the golf club **20** of the present invention. In this embodiment, the hosel **26** includes a hosel extension arm **26***a*, which extends the hosel **26** upward and positions the attachment of the shaft **22** to the club head **24** above the surface of the crown **33**. In this embodiment, the hosel **26** has an opening **49**, a hollow interior **51**, a hosel stud **52** with a threaded bore **53'**, and a protuberance **82** on the exterior surface of the hosel stud **52**.

As shown in FIGS. **21–25**, the hosel stud **52** preferably has a length, L_{hs}, ranging from 0.25 inch to 1.0 inch, and most preferably 0.560 inch. The hosel stud **52** preferably has a diameter ranging from 0.150 inch to 0.5 inch, and most preferably 0.259 inch. The hosel stud **52** preferably has a taper of from 1–3 degrees and most preferably 1.5 degrees from a top to a bottom of the hosel stud **52**.

As shown in FIGS. **16–17**, the shaft **22** preferably has a notch **80** at the opening **47**. In this embodiment, the notch

engages with the protuberance **82** on the exterior surface of the stud **52** to prevent the rotational movement of the shaft **22** within the hollow interior **51** of the hosel **26**.

Similar to the embodiment of FIG. **11**, the attachment assembly **30** includes the locking sleeve **50**, the screw **34** and the washer **97**. The screw **34** is threaded into the threaded bore **53'** of the hosel stud **52**. The locking sleeve **50** engages the exterior surface of the hosel stud **52** and the interior surface **45** of the shaft **22**. The exterior surface **55** of the shaft **22** engages the interior surface **57** of the hosel **26**. This embodiment also utilizes a screwdriver, not shown, which is placed through the interior **38** of the shaft from the butt end **43** to turn the screw **34** to threadingly engage the threaded bore **53'** of the hosel stud **52** to prevent movement of the locking sleeve **50** which engages the exterior surface of the hosel stud **52** and the interior surface **45** of the shaft **22** thereby securing the shaft **22** to the club head **24** without the need of an adhesive.

FIG. **26** illustrates yet another embodiment in which the attachment assembly **30** is the locking sleeve **50'**. In this embodiment, the locking sleeve **50'** engages the exterior surface **55** of the shaft **22** and the interior surface **57** of the hosel **26** thereby securing the shaft **22** to the club head **24** without the use of an adhesive.

As shown in FIGS. **27–31**, the locking sleeve **50'** has a body **60'** with a wall **62'**. The locking sleeve **50'** is preferably composed of a metal material, most preferably an aluminum material. The body **60'** has an aperture **64'** extending between a first opening **66'** and a second opening **68'**. The body **60'** also has at least a first slot **70'** in the wall **62'** extending from the first opening **66'** to the second opening **68'**. The body **60'** also has a second slot **72** in the wall **62'** which extends from the second opening **68'** but ends prior to the first opening **66'**, and the length L_{2s}, is preferably between 25% to 90% of the length of the locking sleeve **50'**, and most preferably 66% of the length of the locking sleeve **50'**. The locking sleeve **50'** preferably has a length, L_s, which ranges from 0.25 inch to 2.0 inches, and is most preferably 0.6 inch in length. The locking sleeve **50'** preferably has a first diameter, D_{s1}, ranging from 0.250 inch to 0.75 inch, and is most preferably 0.438 inch. The locking sleeve **50'** preferably has a second diameter, D_{s2}, ranging from 0.200 inch to 0.70 inch, and is most preferably 0.407 inch. Further, the locking sleeve **50'** preferably tapers from the first opening **66'** to the second opening **68'** from 1 to 5 degrees, and most preferably 3 degrees. The first slot **70'** preferably has a width ranging from 0.020 inch to 0.15 inch, and is most preferably 0.034 inch. The second slot **72** preferably has a similar width as the first slot **70'**. The first and second slots **70'** and **72** allow for the contraction and extension of the locking sleeve **50'**.

From the foregoing it is believed that those skilled in the pertinent art will recognize the meritorious advancement of this invention and will readily understand that while the present invention has been described in association with a preferred embodiment thereof, and other embodiments illustrated in the accompanying drawings, numerous changes, modifications and substitutions of equivalents may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of this invention which is intended to be unlimited by the foregoing except as may appear in the following appended claims. Therefore, the embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined in the following appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf club comprising:

a shaft having a wall defining a hollow interior, the shaft having a tip end and a butt end;

a club head having a body with a heel end and a toe end, the body having a hosel with an open end and a hollow interior; and

a locking sleeve for securing the tip end of the shaft to the hosel, the locking sleeve engaging an exterior surface of the tip end of the shaft and an interior surface of the hosel, the locking sleeve having a body with a wall defining an aperture extending from a first opening to a second opening, the body having a first slot and a second slot in the wall, the first slot extending from the first opening to the second opening, the second slot extending from the second opening toward the first opening, the second slot extending no more than ninety percent of a length of the locking sleeve, the body being tapered in diameter from the first opening to the second opening.

2. The golf club according to claim **1** wherein the length of the locking sleeve is in the range of 0.30 inch to 1.0 inch.

3. The golf club according to claim **1** wherein the locking sleeve has a taper in the range of 1 degree to 5 degrees.

4. The golf club according to claim **1** wherein the second slot has a length ranging from 0.2 inch to 0.75 inch.

5. The golf club according to claim **1** wherein each of the first slot and the second slot has a width of approximately 0.034 inch.

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